

## Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIEP-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 CU-05 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01

AID-20 EUR-25 NIC-01 OPR-02 DRC-01 /166 W

----- 059798

R 261225Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6221

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 13783

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: STUDENT LEADERSHIP CRISIS II

REF: BANGKOK 10710

SUMMARY: SOMBAT THAMRONGTHANYAWONG RESIGNED ON 30 JUNE AS SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT) (REFTEL). THE NSCT HAS SINCE TRIED TWICE TO REPLACE HIM AND FAILED TO FIND ANYONE THAT TWO-THIRDS OF THE TWENTY-ONE MAN NSCT EXECUTIVE COUNCIL COULD SUPPORT. IT APPEARS AT THIS WRITING THAT ACTIVIST ELEMENTS ARE ENCOUNTERING CONSIDERABLE TROUBLE IN TRYING TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE NSCT. END SUMMARY.

1. THE FIRST NSCT EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ELECTION, HELD ON 7 AUGUST 1974, CAUGHT MOST OBSERVERS ENTIRELY OFF GUARD WHEN PIRAPON THIRIYAKASEM, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THAMMASAT STUDENTS' UNION, FAILED TO OBTAIN THE REQUIRED TWO-THIRDS OF THE VOTE OF THE TWENTY-ONE MAN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. PIRAPON  
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WAS RUNNING UNOPPOSED. HE WAS A LEADER IN THE OCTOBER 1973

PROTEST, HAD ORGANIZED A SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITION ON CHINA AT THAMMASAT EARLY THIS YEAR, AND HAD GOOD CONTACTS WITH THE FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT STUDENTS OF THAILAND (FIST). THE ELECTION APPARENTLY TURNED INTO A GRILLING SESSION BY THE COUNCIL ON NATIONAL POLICIES WITH QUESTIONS ON SUCH SUBJECTS AS AID FOR FARMERS AND AMERICAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL. PIRAPON EXPLAINED THAT THE NSCT COULD NOT SOLVE ALL THE CRUCIAL PROBLEMS SINCE IT WAS NOT A GOVERNMENT. IN THE END HE RECEIVED ONLY SEVEN VOTES.

2. THE SECOND ELECTION WAS HELD 25 AUGUST 1974 AND AGAIN THERE WAS ORIGINALLY ONLY ONE CANDIDATE, CHAMRAT SORAPIPAT OF MAHIDON UNIVERSITY. HE, HOWEVER, WITHDREW HIS NAME, FOR REASONS STILL UNCLEAR, JUST PRIOR TO THE ELECTION. YUTHISAT EK-ARKAN, A HUMANITIES STUDENT FROM CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY, THEN APPLIED BUT AFTER ANOTHER GRILLING SESSION, HE WAS ABLE TO GARNER ONLY THREE SUPPORTING VOTES. ACCORDING TO "THE NATION" OF 26 AUGUST, QUESTIONS CONCERNING COUPS, U.S. FORCES AND CORRUPTION DOMINATED THE PRE-ELECTION SESSION. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE THEN DECIDED TO SELECT AN ACTING NSCT SECRETARY GENERAL AND CHOSE CHANGTHONG OPATSIRIWIT, A FOURTH YEAR ENGINEERING STUDENT FROM CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY. THE NEXT ELECTION IS SCHEDULED FOR SOMETIME NEXT WEEK.

3. COMMENT: PRESS REPORTS ON THESE ELECTIONS PROVIDE LITTLE SUBSTANCE ON THE ISSUES INVOLVED. THIS IS INDICATIVE OF THE HARD TIMES ON WHICH THE STUDENT MOVEMENT HAS FALLEN. SOME OBSERVERS EXPLAIN THE RECENT ELECTION DIFFICULTIES AS THE RESULT OF STUDENT CLIQUE GROUP INFIGHTING. OTHERS SEE IT AS A VOTE AGAINST THE NSCT. WHATEVER THE CAUSE, THE LIBERAL STUDENTS ARE HAVING A DIFFICULT TIME HOISTING THEMSELVES TO THE TOP OF THE NSCT SUPERSTRUCTURE. MILITANT STUDENT ACTIVISM IS GETTING BAD PRESS AND IS TURNING OFF MORE AND MORE PEOPLE. FURTHERMORE, MANY STUDENT GROUPS MAY BE UNDERGOING A SERIOUS SOUL SEARCHING AND HAVEN'T FINALLY DECIDED WHAT NEW PURPOSES AND NEW LEADERS THE SITUATION REQUIRES.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, STUDENT GROUPS, ELECTIONS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 26 AUG 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** martinml  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**Reference:** BANGKOK 10710  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
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**Review Comment:** n/a  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** STUDENT LEADERSHIP CRISIS II  
**TAGS:** PGOV, PINT, TH, NSCT, (SOMBAT THARONGTHANYAWONG)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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